

REMARKS

Claims 1, 5 and 7 have been amended herewith. Claims 4 and 8-9 have been canceled.
New Claims 11, 12 and 13 have been added.

Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the recitation of objected Claim 4.

Claim 7 has been amended to read as an independent claim, reciting the subject matter of original Claim 1.

New Claims 11, 12 and 13 depend from Claim 7 and mirror the subject matter of Claims 2, 3 and 6, respectively.

Upon entry of the above amendment, Claims 1-3, 5-7 and 11-13 will be all the claims pending in the application.

Response to the Rejection of Claim 8 under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claim 8 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which application regards as the invention.

Applicants' Response

Claim 8 has been canceled, thus obviating a response to this rejection.

Response to the Rejection of Claim 8 under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claim 8 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,955,613 to Gendreau ("Gendreau").

Applicants' Response

Claim 8 has been canceled, thus obviating a response to this rejection.

Response to the Rejection of Claims 1, 2, 6, 9 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1, 2, 6, 9 and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,585,440 to Yamada et al. ("Yamada").

Applicants' Response

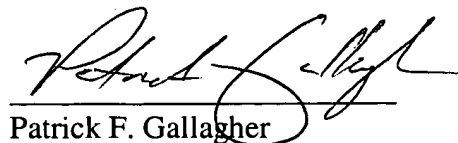
Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the recitations Claim 4. Claims 2 and 6 depend from newly amended claim 1. Claims 9 and 10 have been canceled.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be reconsidered and withdrawn.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



Patrick F. Gallagher
Registration No. 54,109

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC
Telephone: (202) 293-7060
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

WASHINGTON OFFICE

23373

CUSTOMER NUMBER

Date: December 13, 2004